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**Doctor
Johnson
His Life
Works &
Table Talk**

**Centenary
Edition**



**London
T. Fisher Unwin**





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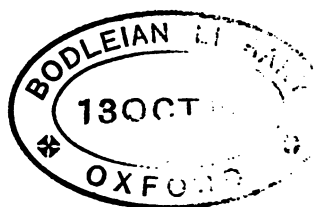
Doctor Johnson

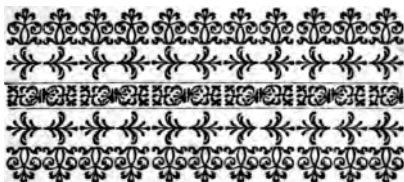
*HIS LIFE
WORKS & TABLE
TALK*

Centenary Edition

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
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PREFATORY NOTE.



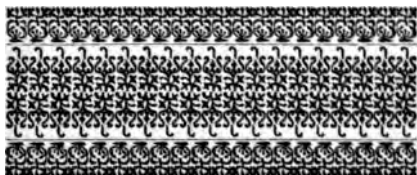
SEVENTY years ago Lord Byron, speaking of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," which he described as "the finest critical work extant," said, "The opinion of that truly great man, whom it is the present fashion to decry, will ever be received by me with that deference which time will restore to him from all." If there was a temporary eclipse of the fame and popularity of Johnson it has long since passed away. In

every land where the English tongue is spoken, his name is mentioned with respect and honour. The centenary of his death, in 1784, being celebrated in his native city of Lichfield, this little book is offered as a tribute to the memory of one who, as a man even more than as an author, was recognized as the chief of the republic of letters in the eighteenth century. May the shadow of his great name never grow less, nor the influence of his noble character ever be diminished !

JAMES MACAULAY, M.A., M.D.

Editor of the "Leisure Hour."





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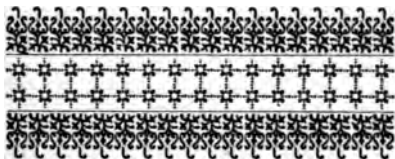
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DOCTOR JOHNSON.



IF the fame of Dr. Johnson depended on his writings alone, few wreaths would now be laid on his tomb. His name is indeed known, wherever the English language is spoken, as the author of the Dictionary ; but his other works, whether in prose or verse, have not many readers in our days. They were popular once, but they are little in accord with modern taste ; while the excellence of their matter does not make up

in public estimation for the ponderosity of their style. Nevertheless, he is better known and more highly honoured than any other author of the last century, and no name stands out more conspicuously in its literary annals.

This fulness and freshness of fame, after he has been a hundred years in his grave, he owes in great measure to Boswell's biography, "which has done more for Johnson," as Lord Macaulay says, "than the best of his own books could do." Boswell shows us the man, and it is as a man rather than as an author that he best deserves to be remembered. This immortal book will perpetuate his renown, and in it the sage appears to us still in stately majesty, as he did when he was supreme and almost without a rival in the literary circles of his time. This position he held as much by his moral excellence as by his intellectual power, and by his conversation more than by writings—a position unique in the his-

tory of modern times. Not Dryden, not Addison had such a throne, and we must go back to classic instances, such as Socrates in Athens, or Cato in Rome, to find eminence and influence parallel to that of Johnson in London when George the Third was king.

The extraordinary homage paid to Johnson, at least in his latter years, by people of every grade and calling in life, appears to us now scarcely credible, yet the following facts will convince any one that there is no exaggeration as to the deference shown to him.

The Doctor had composed a Latin epitaph for the monument in Westminster Abbey to Oliver Goldsmith. Some of his friends thought that it would be better to have the epitaph in English, so that the memory of so eminent an English writer might be perpetuated in that language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament. The subject came up at a dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds', and all

agreed that a respectful request should be made to that effect. But the question arose as to who was to make the proposal—either to write the epitaph in English, or at least so to alter the Latin as to bring out some of the more popular points of Goldsmith's character and works. No one seemed willing to sign a written petition, which the Bishop of Killaloe drew up, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. The suggestion was made that they might adopt a "round robin," as sailors call it, which they use when making a complaint, without wishing it to be seen who puts his name first or last on the paper. The proposition was instantly assented to, and Mr. Burke drew up the well-known Address, in the form in which it appears in Boswell's Life, beginning, "We, the circumscribers," &c. Sir Joshua consented to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received the document

with great good humour, and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen "that he would alter the epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it ; but he would not consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription." Fancy a number of distinguished men, among whom were Edmund Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds, George Colman and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Sir William Forbes and Dean Barnard, James Warton and Edward Gibbon, hesitating to approach Johnson, except in a round robin, like sailors to their captain, or boys to their master !

In a letter to Boswell, a few years later, Bennett Langton describes a scene he had witnessed one evening at Mr. Vesey's house. "The company consisted chiefly of ladies, among whom were the Duchess Dowager of Portland, the Duchess of Beaufort, and her mother Mrs. Boscawen, Lady Lucan, Lady Clermont, and others of note,

both for their station and understandings. Among the gentlemen were Lord Althorp, Lord Macartney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr Wraxall, Dr. Warren, Mr. Pepys, the Master in Chancery, and Dr. Barnard, Provost of Eton. As soon as Dr. Johnson was come in and had taken a chair, the company began to collect round him till they became not less than four or five deep: those behind standing, and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr. Johnson and the Provost of Eton, while the others contributed occasionally their remarks."

This scene is rather a formal one, and looks like an instance of the skilful "lionizing" of a Mrs. Leo Hunter of that day, but it certainly shows the high estimation in which the Doctor was held in the best society.

With the exception of two or three men, like Foote or Wolcot, who had

motives for their scurrility, there was hardly a man of public note who did not respect Johnson. Those who did not appreciate his moral greatness regarded him with wholesome fear. Even Wilkes, whom everybody abused, and who was ready to abuse everybody, showed marked respect for him. The first time they met at dinner it was feared that the strong antagonism of their political opinions might lead to unpleasant contest ; but Wilkes met him with studied and courteous deference, and Johnson said afterwards that "Jack talked well ; he is a scholar ; and has the manners of a gentleman."

An amusing instance of the Doctor's popularity is reported from Northamptonshire, where a man who represented himself as his brother was well received for about two years by the country gentlemen. At length he became so troublesome and impudent that suspicions arose, and Allen the printer, a Northamptonshire man, was written to.

Allen went to Johnson, and on being assured that he had no brother living, wrote to the country, and the impostor soon disappeared. In telling this story Johnson said, "It pleased me to hear that so much was got by using my name. It is not every name can carry double; do both for a man's self and his brother! I should be glad to see the fellow. However, I could have done nothing against him. A man can have no redress for his name being used, or ridiculous stories being told of him in the newspapers, except he can show that he has suffered damage."

The fame of Dr. Johnson's conversational powers was well known to the king, George III. His majesty signified his desire to be told when he was next at the queen's library, where Johnson went occasionally to assist his friend Dr. Barnard, the librarian, in arranging the books. The interview was a most satisfactory one, the king entering into conversation on a great

variety of topics, and listening to Johnson in the most gracious manner. "I found his majesty wished I should talk," he said afterwards, "and I made it my business to talk." Boswell has gathered much of the conversation, and refers to this as "one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life." His majesty asked if he was then writing anything. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The king then said, "I do not think that you borrow much from anybody," as if urging him to give more of his own original thoughts to the world. Johnson said he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so, too," said the king, "if you had not written so well." Johnson told Boswell that "no man could have paid a handsomer compliment, and it was fit for a king to pay. It was decisive." When asked by

another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds', whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, sir. When the king had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign."

After the king withdrew, Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his majesty's conversation and gracious behaviour. He said to Dr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the king as they will ; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second." Johnson spoke to the king with profound respect, but in his usual manly, independent manner. When Goldsmith heard of it he said to Johnson, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done ; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it !"

While Johnson could suit his conversation to all minds, from king to servant, or from philosopher to peasant, his freest utterances were among his congenial and appreciative companions at the club. In these social gatherings he found his chief recreation and pleasure. To relieve the monotony of his labour when preparing the Dictionary, he joined some friends in establishing a club, which met in the evening for literary conversation and discussion. They met at the King's Head, in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row. The members associated with him in this little society included Dr. Bathurst, Dr. Hawkesworth, Sir John Hawkins, and others of various callings and professions. This was the precursor of the more famous "Literary Club," which in later years was founded by Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and which flourishes to our own day, although under conditions widely different from the homelier usages of older times. The

list of members in these early years included many illustrious names, Burke, Goldsmith, Langton, Bishop Percy, Windham, Fox, Dr. Burney, Sir William Jones, Edward Malone, Gibbon, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Robert Chambers, Mr. Dunning, first Lord Ashburton, Lord Ossory, and many others distinguished in public life. The members in later times have been not less illustrious, as it has been an object of ambition to be enrolled in a society so famed in history.

Dr. Johnson was eminently "a clubbable man," delighting in such gatherings, where intellectual recreation, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" formed the chief attraction. Personally he was extremely temperate ; in fact, through most of his life he was a total abstainer from alcoholic drink ; a habit acquired, he tells us, partly from regard to health, and partly on moral grounds, as he found it easier and safer to abstain entirely from wine than to be a moder-

ate drinker. He took no vow, but he set a good example at a time when excessive drinking was thought no moral or social disgrace. There seems to have been no smoking at the club, the use of tobacco at this time having gone much out of fashion, and not becoming again prevalent till a later period.

We are not dependent on Boswell alone, who was a regular attendant when in London, for the record of Johnson's table talk at the club. Dr. Percy, Sir John Hawkins, Reynolds, Malone, and other members have left valuable recollections of what was done and said at the meetings. From these various sources we can form a good idea of the conversational powers of Johnson, on which his fame so largely rests. Some specimens of his table talk form the substance of the present centenary memorial, but to those of a new generation who are not familiar with Johnson's history a brief reference to his life and works may be acceptable.



TO the events of his early years it is not necessary to devote much space. Born at Lichfield, September 18, 1709 ; he received his first education at Lichfield school, and at the grammar-school of Stonebridge, in Worcestershire. In 1728 he entered as a fellow-commoner at Pembroke College, Oxford ; but his university career was cut short in less than three years, by the failure of his father, Michael Johnson, the Lichfield

bookseller. After an unsuccessful attempt to establish a school, and having assisted Mr. Warren, a bookseller in Birmingham, where his schoolfellow Mr. Hector had settled as a surgeon, Johnson resolved to devote himself to literature as his calling. He offered his services to Mr. Cave, who had started the "Gentleman's Magazine" a few years before, and with whom he had some correspondence while at Birmingham.

His marriage with Mrs. Porter delayed a purpose he had formed to migrate to London, and he made a second attempt to support himself as a schoolmaster. The school did not succeed, for lack of pupils, only three being attracted by his advertisements, two of them being David Garrick and his brother George, their father Captain Garrick residing in Lichfield.

The resolution to seek his fortune in London was then firmly formed. His pupil, David Garrick, determined to

accompany him, professedly to study law, but already with ambition to enter on a dramatic career. The two adventurers started for London in 1737. In after life, when both had risen to eminence, they used playfully to recall the time of early struggle, not omitting the day when they left Lichfield, as they afterwards used to say, "with a few pence in their pockets." Garrick had a career of steady prosperity, and soon became rich as well as famous. Johnson's poverty continued for many years, and the record of his toils and hardships as a man of letters is altogether a sad and painful story. He had experience to the utmost of the drudgery of writing for bread. For the booksellers he wrote reviews, prefaces, biographies, essays, and miscellaneous pieces, in prose and verse, for very small remuneration. For a time he assisted Guthrie, Cave's principal literary hack, in preparing the parliamentary debates for the "Gentleman's Magazine," and

on Guthrie obtaining a pension for his services to the Government, Johnson succeeded him as principal reporter of the proceedings in the "Senate of Lilliput," for actual reports of parliament were then sternly forbidden. But even when fully employed by Cave he had continual struggle with poverty. In one of his letters we find him asking for the advance of a guinea. The story is well known of a visitor at Cave's house seeing a plate handed to some one behind a screen, where Johnson sat, too shabbily clothed to present himself. Yet at this very time of hardest penury, he was ever working for others more than for himself. He had to support his wife and his aged mother at Lichfield. For brethren of the pen, poorer than himself, he was constantly supplying matter, or sharing with them his own scanty earnings. It was said by one of his friends that "he was always giving or interceding for charitable help to others, when he

seemed a more proper object of it himself." Dear old Great-Heart! we cannot read even now without a thrill of pleasure the record of his getting a Government pension of £300 a year. This put him beyond the fear of want, and enabled him to continue his generous assistance to others.

Never was a literary pension more worthily bestowed. In those times favours were rarely granted except for political services. Johnson had abused pensioners in his Dictionary, and he feared lest the acceptance of one might imply loss of independence. Lord Bute behaved very handsomely in the matter, notwithstanding Johnson's dislike both of pensioners and Scotchmen. "Pray, my Lord, what am I expected to do for this pension?" Johnson asked the minister. "It is not given you," was the reply, "for anything you are to do, but for what you have done." He repeated these words twice over, that he might be sure Johnson heard

them, and thus set his mind perfectly at ease.

Although Johnson was now alone in life, having lost his wife, and having no relatives dependent on him, his home was more than ever kept up, with his enlarged means, less for himself than for others. It was filled with as strange inmates as were ever brought together under one roof, most of them wholly supported by the master's generous charity. If he had been lord of a mansion or a palace, most of it would have been used as an asylum or hospital, a refuge for the afflicted and sorrowful, the poor and the outcast. He more than once said, when asked how he could assist such and such a one, that he liked to help those whom he knew nobody else would help. With some of the inmates of his home in Bolt Court he could enjoy a certain amount of companionship. Mrs. Williams, the aged and blind widow of a Welsh clergyman, was a woman of

some education and culture, and was able to talk to his visitors. Another widow, Mrs. Desmoulins, with her daughter Miss Carmichael, were known from early Lichfield days. The complaints and quarrels of these female pensioners often sorely tried the good Doctor's patience, and in his letters he makes doleful allusion to them. Then there was Mr. Levett, an irregular medical practitioner, himself poorer than most of his patients, but with kindness of heart and varied knowledge in subjects about which Johnson liked to talk. Levett made a wretched and foolish marriage, but this did not quench his patron's regard or pity ; and when separated from his Drury Lane partner he was taken back to Bolt Court, and remained there till his death at the age of seventy. The lines written on this occasion show Johnson's feeling towards "the poor man's doctor." We quote only two of the stanzas :



Well tried through many a varying year,
See Levett to the grave descend ;
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of every friendless name the friend.

In misery's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely want retired to die.

Mr. G. A. Sala, who has much of the Johnsonian largeness of heart and diversity of knowledge, says that "when death relieved him of Levett, the same pen which wrote the noble prologue recited by Garrick on the opening of Drury Lane Theatre in 1747, embalmed the memory of the humble medical practitioner in perhaps the most beautiful and touching obituary lines that ever came from an English pen."

The black servant, Frank Barber, was a conspicuous member of the household. He had been brought, when a lad, from Jamaica, by Colonel Bathurst, father of Johnson's friend Dr. Bathurst. He was treated with great kindness, and on the whole served his

master with fidelity and care. He usually accompanied the Doctor to church, and the pew where they sat in St. Clement Danes, in the Strand, is marked by a brass plate with an inscription.

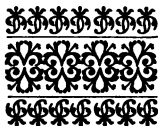
These eccentric pleasures of charity were not indulged in to the neglect of the claims of his own kindred, or the fulfilment of all natural duties. His affection for Mrs. Johnson, though he married her when nearly double his own age, remained undiminished through her life, and his letters and diaries contain frequent allusions to his "poor dear Tetty." Her broken health required from him much expense as well as attention in her later years, for he had to take lodgings for her at Hampstead and other places out of London. For her memory he cherished the most tender remembrance, and only a few months before his own death he honoured her memory by an affectionate epitaph, which was in

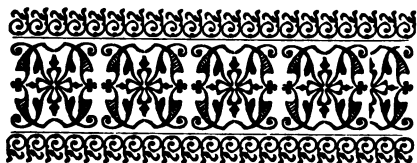


scribed on her tombstone at Bromley, in Kent, where she was buried.

Nor was his fond attention less marked towards his aged mother at Lichfield, and to her daughter Lucy Porter, and other friends of his early life. Although rarely able to go to see his mother, he contributed liberally to her support and comfort. When at last she died, at the age of ninety, in January, 1759, it was to obtain money for defraying the expenses of her funeral, and for paying some debts left by her, that he wrote the story of "Rasselas." One of the latest letters which he wrote to her was in these words : " Dear honoured mother, your weakness afflicts me beyond what I am willing to communicate to you. I do not think you unfit to face death, but I know not how to bear the thought of losing you. I often pray for you ; do you pray for me. I am, dear, dear mother, your dutiful son, Samuel Johnson."

Considering the warmth of his filial and conjugal affection, and in pages written at such a time, we feel the force of the touching words put into the mouth of the sage in *Rasselas*, when he says, “ I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband.”





ALTHOUGH the works of Dr. Johnson are now little read, and their former reputation may have been somewhat exaggerated, we must regret the comparative neglect to which they have been consigned. They are the productions of a powerful and generous mind, and they have excellences, both of thought and expression, in which the lighter literature of our time is generally deficient. With all their faults of style

the prose writings have a force and felicity of diction, rising often to noblest eloquence. And as to his poems, the words of one well qualified to judge, William Cowper, describe them now as when written in his epitaph—

Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and
strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song.

The first literary work undertaken by him by choice not from necessity, was his poem "London," in imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal. It was published anonymously. The remarkable ability of this poem was at once and universally recognized. The veteran poet and satirist, Pope, was delighted, and he showed nothing of the meanness of jealousy with which he has sometimes been charged. Failing to ascertain the name of the new writer, he said that whoever he was he must soon be *deterré*; he could not long remain concealed. Within a week a second edition was called for. The poem breathes

the spirit of manly independence, with patriotic affection for his native land, in spite of the abounding faults and follies which he satirized. There were touches, too, of personal feeling, as in the lines descriptive of his own position and aspirations—

This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
Slow rises worth, by poverty oppressed !

“London” appeared in May, 1738. On this, and on his second poem of the same kind, “The Vanity of Human Wishes,” an imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, his place among the classic poets of England mainly depends. In the tragedy of “Irene” are some noble sentiments and passages of stately blank verse ; but neither this nor any of his minor poems have retained popularity. No change of public taste, however, can alter the verdict as to “The Vanity of Human Wishes.” “It is a grand poem,” said Byron, “and so true ! true as the Tenth of Juvenal himself.” Some of the instances of

“the mirage of life,” such as that of the warrior, Charles XII. of Sweden, are as highly finished pictures as poet ever drew. Very noble, too, is the conclusion of the poem, which shows where human wishes can alone find a satisfying portion, and true happiness be found—

Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure whate’er He gives, He gives the best.
Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the sky aspires.
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned ;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill ;
For patience, sovereign o’er transmuted will ;
For faith which, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature’s signal for retreat ;
These goods for man the laws of Heaven
ordain,
These goods He grants, who grants the power
to gain ;
With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

The best of the prose works are “The Lives of the Poets,” the “Preface to Shakespeare,” the “Journey to the Hebrides,” and “Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.” In all his other writings,

notably in the "Rambler," are pieces of remarkable power or elegance, and some of the now forgotten essays and articles on miscellaneous subjects are worthy of permanent place in any collection of the "Beauties of English Literature." Few, however, find time for the perusal of older authorship amidst the multitude of modern works flowing incessantly from the press. The student and scholar alone take the trouble to read what Dr. Johnson wrote, and all who do will be amply rewarded for their pains. To a generation which knows not Dr. Johnson, a few passages may serve to show the spirit and the style of his prose works.

Let us begin with some which are familiar, because often quoted or referred to, though not more striking or characteristic than others that remain unnoted. Who knows not the reflections on landing at Iona? of which Boswell says, "Had our tour produced nothing else but this sublime passage,

the world must have acknowledged that it was not made in vain." Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, was so much struck on reading it, that he clasped his hands together, and remained for some time in an attitude of silent admiration. Thousands have read the words with sympathetic emotion amidst the scenes described.

"We were now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indiffer-

ent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. The man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

Scarcely less striking in thought and rhythmic in language is the close of his Preface to Shakespeare. For a critical edition of the plays he lacked the necessary special learning and knowledge, but not one of all the learned critics approaches Johnson in his general estimate and description of the great dramatic poet.

"Shakespeare is, above all writers—at least, above all modern writers—the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions which can operate but upon

small numbers ; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

“It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. . . . As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places ; they are natural, and therefore durable. The adventitious peculiarities of personal

habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tint, without any remains of former lustre ; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature ; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them ; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another ; but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury the adamant of Shakespeare."

As illustrating the wise and practical tone of his moral sentiments, a good specimen may be found in his picture of the miseries of war.

"It is wonderful with what coolness and indifference the greater part of

mankind see war commenced. Those that hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle, and a triumph. Some, indeed, must perish in the successful field, but they die upon the bed of honour, resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest, and, filled with England's glory, smile in death !

“The life of a modern soldier is ill represented by heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more terrible than the cannon or the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy ; the rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction ; pale, torpid, spiritless, and helpless ; gasping and groaning, unpitied among men, made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery ; and were at last

whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome stations, where courage is useless and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly melted away.

“Thus is a people gradually exhausted, for the most part with little effect. The wars of civilized nations make very few changes in the system of empire. The public perceives scarcely any alteration but an increase of debt; and the few individuals who are benefited are not supposed to have the clearest right to their advantages. If he that shared the danger enjoyed the profit, and after bleeding in battle grew rich by victory, he might show his gains without envy. But at the conclusion of a ten years’ war, how are we recompensed for the death of multitudes and the expense of millions, but by contemplating the sudden glories

of paymasters and agents, contractors and commissaries, whose equipages shine like meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations ! ”

The best and wisest statesmen of all times have ever been advocates of peace, and the most distinguished soldiers of our own country, such as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Charles Napier, have spoken and written as strongly about the evils and miseries of war. Would that the sentiments expressed by Dr. Johnson were laid to heart by the writers in the public press, who in our day influence as well express the voice of public opinion in this matter !

The famous letter to Lord Chesterfield on the publication of the Dictionary is too well known to be quoted here, and we give but the closing sentences of it : “ The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am

indifferent, and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it ; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

“ Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed if I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less ; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.”

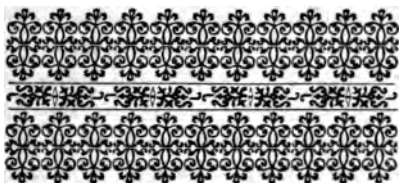
The Preface to the Dictionary is itself one of the noblest pieces that Johnson ever wrote, and some of its personal allusions are so touching that few can withhold the warmest sympathy and affection for the writer. Horne Tooke said he never could read it without tears.

“In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors : whether I shall add anything by my own writings to the reputation of English literature must be left to time. Much of my life has been lost under the pressure of disease ; much has been trifled away ; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me ; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if, by my assistance, foreign nations and distant ages gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth ; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton, and to Boyle.

“ When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself. . . . When it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed ; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns, yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance from the learned, and without any patronage from the great ; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. . . . I may be surely contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it

avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success or miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."





WE must refrain from multiplying quotations, but there is scarcely a page of Johnson's writings from which wise and eloquent sentences could not be taken. A collection of these would go far to replace the author on a higher position than he now holds in English prose literature, while a few of his striking passages would make the reputation of some of the smaller writers by whom he is now contemned or

neglected. His volumes teem with "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," and almost always we feel that we are in contact with a mind as good as it was great. Here are but a few specimens of his brief sentences.

"Nothing can be great which is not right. Nothing which reason condemns can be suitable to the dignity of the human mind. To be driven by external motives from the path which our own heart approves, to give way to anything but conviction, to suffer the opinion of others to rule our choice or overpower our resolves, is to submit tamely to the lowest and most ignominious slavery, and to resign the right of directing our own lives."

"Piety practised in solitude, like the flower that blooms in the desert, may give its fragrance to the winds of heaven, and delight those disembodied spirits that survey the works of God and the actions of men ; but it bestows no assistance upon earthly beings, and

however free from taints of impurity, yet wants the sacred splendour of beneficence."

"It is imagined by some that whenever they aspire to please, they are required to be merry, and to show the gladness of their souls by flights of pleasantry and bursts of laughter. But though these men may for a time be heard with applause and admiration, they seldom delight us long. Gaiety is to good humour as animal perfumes to vegetable fragrance. The one overpowers weak spirits, and the other recreates and revives them."

"Those who, in consequence of superior capacities and attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, ought to be reminded that nothing will supply the want of prudence ; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible."

"It is impossible to see the long scrolls in which every contract is in-

cluded, with all their appendages of seals and attestation, without wondering at the depravity of those beings who must be restrained from violation of promise by such formal and public evidences, and precluded from equivocation and subterfuge by such punctilious minuteness. Among all the satires to which folly and wickedness have given occasion none is equally severe with a bond or settlement."

"He that has lived without knowing to what height desire may be raised by vanity, with what rapture baubles are snatched out of the hands of rival collectors; how the eagerness of one raises eagerness in another, and one worthless purchase makes another necessary, may, by passing a few hours at an auction, learn more than can be shown by many volumes of maxims or essays."

"Rank may be conferred by princes, and wealth bequeathed by misers or robbers, but the honours of a lasting

name and the veneration of distant ages only the sons of learning have the power of bestowing."

"He that can only be useful on great occasions may die without exerting his abilities, and stand a helpless spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away happiness, and which nothing is required to remove but a little firmness of purpose, dexterity of conduct, and readiness of expedient."

"Whatever is done skilfully appears to be done with ease, and art when it is once observed vanishes from observation. We are therefore more powerfully excited to emulation by those who have attained the highest degree of excellence, and whom we can therefore with least reason hope to equal."

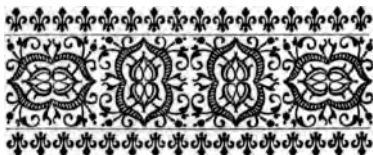
Such are a few brief extracts which we take in turning over, almost at random, some pages of Johnson. Treasures of thought or felicities of expression we find in whichever of his writings we examine. In the "Lives of

the Poets" his wisdom was ripest, and the variety of subjects incidentally introduced is surprising. Although his style differs so widely from that of Addison, whom he always commended to others as their model, his influence on the literature of his time was not unlike that of the great essayist of the older time, and no higher praise could be given. After quoting Tickell's remark that Addison "employed wit on the side of virtue and religion," Johnson says, "He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others ; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety and vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character, *above all Greek, above all Rome fame.* No greater felicity can genius attain

than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness ; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of good men ; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having *turned many to righteousness.*"

To Johnson himself this tribute of praise may justly be applied, as having done for literature the same service which in his day was rendered by Addison, an honour truly above all Greek, above all Roman fame.





OF the moral and religious side of Johnson's life and writings it is fitting that something should here be said. His mother (Sarah Ford was her maiden name) was a woman of much shrewdness and good sense, and her piety was not inferior to her understanding. By her Samuel was early trained in truth and virtue, and from her he obtained his first lessons of religious faith and duty. He tells us that these early im-

pressions were not very durable ; but, when at Oxford, as he records, he was diligent in the study of Scripture and of religious books. "I took up 'Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life,' " he says, "expecting to find it a dull book, as such books generally are, and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an over-match for me ; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry." The solemnity of feeling in regard to religious subjects he never afterwards lost, although he himself confessed that he allowed other pursuits too much to engross his thoughts, and often lamented that his practice of Christian duties fell far short of what it ought to be. His profession as a man of letters and dramatic critic sometimes brought him into dangerous associations. Poverty had also brought him in contact with strange and not always reputable companions, as with Savage ; but nothing

has ever truthfully been said against his own purity of life or honourable conduct. His own strong and honest intellect, with the study of the Christian evidences, led him to fixed and firm conviction of the truths of revelation, and the main doctrines of the Christian creed. His devotions, his charities, the whole course of his life and tone of his character, attested the sincerity and strength of his belief. He attended church with much regularity, and partook of the sacrament with humble devotion. A volume of private prayer and meditation was published after his death, with notes of his thoughts and feelings, his confessions and resolves—notes never intended to see the light—and these give proof of his earnest desire throughout his life to live in communion with his Heavenly Father, and to mould his will to the spirit of his Saviour and Master. This devout frame of mind consecrated all his studies and labours. When he,

alone and unaided, commenced the publication of the "Rambler," he composed and offered earnestly at the throne of grace the following prayer : " Almighty God, the Giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly : grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking Thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote Thy glory and the salvation of myself and others. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ.—Amen." Truly a noble resolve and admirable prayer in regard to literary as to all other work.

In another of his prayers we find him pleading for grace to enable him "to use such diligence in lawful employment as may enable me to support myself and do good to others. O Lord, forgive me the time lost in idleness ; pardon the sins which I have committed, and grant that I may redeem the time misspent, and be recon-

ciled to Thee, in true repentance, that I may live and die in peace, and be received to everlasting happiness. Take not from me, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit, but let me have support and comfort, for Jesus Christ's sake.—Amen.”

Very solemn and touching are the Prayers and Meditations on various occasions, always the outpourings of a pious and devout spirit. Of these posthumous devotional pieces, Dr. Parr said, “He that possesses both integrity of principle and tenderness of feeling—he that admires virtue and reveres religion—he that glows with love of mankind, and reposes his trust in God, will himself become a wiser and better man from contemplating those thoughts which passed in the mind of one of the wisest and best of men, when he communed with his own heart, and poured forth his supplications before the throne of Heaven for mercy and for grace.”

While such was the general tone of Dr. Johnson's mind as to religion, and

while he stood forth, in a frivolous and sceptical age, as a foremost defender of the faith, there was one element lacking in his Christian life and experience. He had the solemnity and godly fear without the peace and joy of a believer. Of death itself he had no terror, but the dread of what follows death often oppressed his spirit. In his last visit to Oxford, at the house of his old tutor, Dr. Adams, of Pembroke, he surprised his friends by a solemn declaration of his fear for the future. "I cannot be sure," he said on another occasion, "that I have fulfilled the conditions on which salvation is granted ; I am afraid I may be one of those who shall be condemned." He never could feel sure that he had *done* enough for the salvation of his soul. Even in that memorable Uttoxeter scene in his old age, when he stood bareheaded in the market-place to make atonement for an act of disobedience in his youth, while the tenderness of conscience is

admired, it is painful to find that he was ruled by what theologians call "the spirit of legality." "I hope," he says, "the penance was expiatory." All through his life the same spirit of self-righteousness runs, the notion of salvation being by works, in some form or other, instead of the evangelical doctrine which Luther had so fully expounded, and in his own bright active Christian life so nobly manifested, the doctrine of free salvation by grace, through faith. Lacking this truth, Johnson lacked the one thing which could give him real peace, to wit, true faith, or personal trust in the Saviour. Lacking this, he was one of those who, in Pauline phrase, "through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage."

But the light and the freedom came at last. It was this which Cowper referred to in that epitaph which is one of the finest tributes ever paid to Johnson's memory :

Who many a noble gift from Heaven possessed,
And Faith at last, alone worth all the rest.

He did not refer to intellectual belief, but to the faith which brings peace and joy.

Dr. Brocklesby, his physician, a man who will not be suspected of fanaticism, told Boswell that "for some time before his death all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and propitiation of Jesus Christ. He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, as necessary beyond all good works whatever for the salvation of mankind." A few days before his death he said to Brocklesby, who was alone with him, "Doctor, you are a worthy man, but I am afraid you are not a Christian! What can I do better for you than offer up in your presence a prayer to the great God that you may become a Christian in my sense of the word?" Instantly he

knelt and put up a fervent prayer. When he got up he caught hold of his friend's hand with great eagerness, crying, "Doctor, you do not say Amen!" The doctor looked confused, but after a pause said "Amen." Johnson said, "My dear doctor, believe a dying man, there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God." Other remarkable incidents and sayings are recorded, but enough has been mentioned to prove that a great change had passed over him during these latter days and weeks of his life.

From other records of the last illness we learn that it was through conversation with Mr. Latrobe, the Moravian bishop, for whom Johnson had the highest regard, and through letters received from a good clergyman, Mr. Winstanley, that he was led to embrace "evangelical" views as to acceptance with God, the views expressed in such Divine words as these, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be

saved ;" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

Receiving these truths, no wonder that his end was peace, and that he could say "the bitterness of death is past." He did not take to his bed till the day before he passed away, December 13, 1784. Till within the last few hours his mind was clear, and his latest words were words of faith and love, of kindness and blessings.

If Johnson had received the gospel in its freeness and fulness at an early period of his life, as Luther did, it would have been well for his personal peace and happiness. Whether his life would have been more useful to the world and the Church, it is vain now to conjecture. As a defender of revealed truth against the assaults of scoffers and infidels he rendered services for which he was fitted by his great intellect and learning. It was said not long since by Mr. Gladstone, that Johnson did more for the Church and State in

England during the eighteenth century than all the statesmen and bishops that it produced. However this may be, there is no part of his biography that can be viewed with the same satisfaction as the closing scene, of which his friend Hannah More said, in the words Shakespeare, that "no action of his life became him like the leaving it."

In the collected works of Dr. Johnson, and in an appendix to Murray's edition of Boswell's Life, a complete chronological list is given of all the writings known to the public. The list fills many pages, and it is probable that many minor miscellaneous pieces are not included. The following are the dates at which his most important works appeared: "London, a Poem," in 1738; "The Vanity of Human Wishes, a Poem," in 1749; "The Rambler," 1749-1752; "The English Dictionary," 1754; "Rasselas," 1759; "The Lives of the Poets," 1777. He received his government pension of £300 a year in 1762.

His first introduction to Boswell was in 1763, and his acquaintance with the Thrales commenced shortly after. He died December 13, 1784.

In now proceeding to give a selection from Johnson's Table Talk, we are reminded of his words with regard to Shakespeare: "His real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen." But there is another way of regarding such selections; they may lead the reader to the larger works from which they are gathered, and so induce him to explore the mines from which such gems have been extracted.

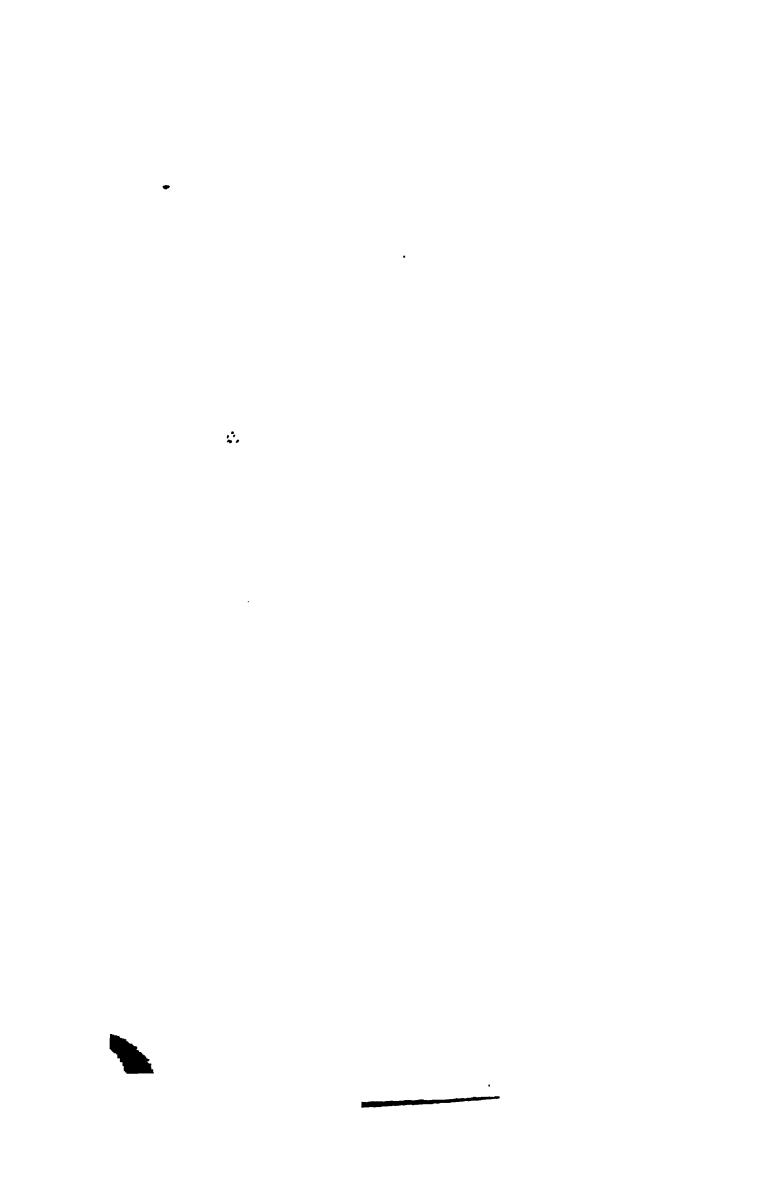


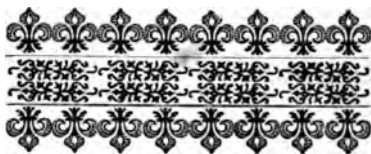
COWPER'S
EPITAPH ON DOCTOR JOHNSON.

“ Here Johnson lies—a sage, by all allowed,
Whom to have bred may well make England
proud :
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought ;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and
strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song ;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last—alone worth all the rest.
Oh ! man immortal by a double prize,
On earth by fame, by favour in the skies ! ”

TABLE TALK.







LONDON.

TALKING with Boswell about London, Johnson said, "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together that the wonderful immensity of London con-

sists." What would he have said of the London of to-day?

* *

Talking of London life, he said, "The happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say, there is more learning and science within the circuit of ten miles from where we now sit than in all the rest of the kingdom." *Boswell*: "The only disadvantage is the great distance at which people live from one another." *Johnson*: "Yes, sir; but that is occasioned by the largeness of it, which is the cause of all the other advantages."

* *

On another occasion he said that "a man stored his mind better there than anywhere else; and that in remote situations a man's body might be feasted, but his mind was starved, and his faculties apt to degenerate from

want of exercise and competition. No place, he said, cured a man's vanity or arrogance so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals and some his superiors."

* * *

It being remarked that one might grow tired of London, and lose the exquisite zest with which occasional visits are relished, Johnson said, "Why, sir, you find no man at all intellectual who is willing to leave London. No, sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

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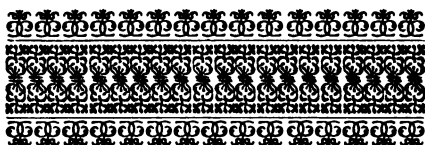
He said also, "There is no place where economy can be so well practised as in London; more can be had for the money, even by the ladies, than

anywhere else. You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place ; you must make a uniform appearance. Here a lady may have well-furnished apartments, and elegant dress, without any meat in the kitchen."

* * *

Walking to church at St. Clement Danes, Boswell remarked that Fleet Street was the most cheerful scene in the world, more delightful than the Vale of Tempé. "Ay, sir," responded Johnson ; "but let it be compared with Mull !" To a similar remark on another occasion Johnson replied, "Yes, sir, Fleet Street has a very animated appearance ; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross."





SCOTLAND AND SCOTCH- MEN.

JOHNSON'S prejudice against Scotland and Scotchmen is one of the most amusing traits in his character. Much of his bantering on the subject arose out of his love of teasing Boswell ; but he showed his dislike long before he met his biographer. At the very first interview the silly Boswell exposed himself to ridicule. It was in the back parlour of the shop of Davies the bookseller ; who, on seeing Johnson coming in, said he would introduce Boswell, who was drinking tea with Davies and his wife.

“Don’t tell him where I come from,” said Boswell.

“Mr. Boswell, from Scotland,” said Davies, roguishly.

“Mr. Johnson,” said Boswell, in apologetic tone ; “I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.”

It was an unlucky speech, although intended to be conciliatory and submissive.

“That, sir,” said Johnson, who took the Scotticism as meaning that he had left his native country, not that he merely belonged to it by birth ; “that, sir, I find, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help !”

* * *

Not long afterwards Boswell entertained Johnson at the Mitre Tavern, and had among his guests Mr. Ogilvie, a fellow-Scotchman, who had written a poem. He asked Johnson’s permission to introduce him. “Certainly,” said the Doctor, with sly pleasantry adding, “but he must give us none

of his poetry." Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for his topic of conversation the praises of his native land. He thought he was safe in saying that Scotland had a great many noble, wild prospects. "I believe, sir," said Johnson, "you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble, wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble, wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman can see is the high road that leads him to England," a sally which set all the company in a roar.

* * *

Of the learning of Scotland he had little opinion. "Their learning," he said, "is like bread in a besieged town; every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal. There is in Scotland a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant has as much learning as one of their clergy.

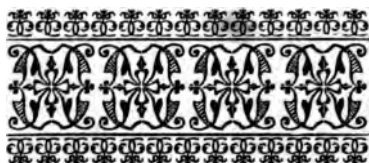
Johnson behaved well, however, on the whole, and paid due respect and courtesy to the northern notables with whom he came in contact during his visit to Scotland and the Western Isles. For some of the Scotchmen of that time, such as Robertson and Beattie, he had high esteem. He nevertheless continued his playful banter after returning to London. At a dinner at the house of Mr. Dilly, the bookseller, in the Poultry, Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch emigrants who had settled in a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. "Why, sir," said Johnson; "all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." Boswell appealed to him as to whether he did not see meat and drink enough in Scotland. "Why, yes, sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home."

John Wilkes was at the table, and

enjoyed heartily the jokes about Scotland, his prejudices on the subject being as strong as Johnson's. Boswell claimed superiority over England in some matters of law. No man, for instance, can be there arrested for debt at the mere charge of a creditor ; judgment must first be obtained, and arrest is only allowed when the creditor can swear that his debtor is *in meditatione fugæ*, or about to fly from the country. "That, I should think," said Wilkes, "may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation."

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* *

When at Edinburgh, Johnson was urged to go to hear Principal Robertson, the historian, preach ; he being also one of the city clergy. "I will hear him," said the Doctor, "if he will get up into a tree and preach, but I will not give a sanction, by my presence, to a Presbyterian assembly."



JOHNSON AND WILKES.

THIS community of feeling seemed to draw Johnson and Wilkes the nearer, for they had already had some interesting conversation during the evening. Alderman Lee having uttered the loyally pathetic plaint, "Poor old England is lost!" Johnson said, "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it," a sly allusion to the *North Briton* controversy in which Wilkes figured so conspicuously. "Had

Lord Bute," said Wilkes, "governed Scotland only I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy." It was after this event that Johnson said how much he had enjoyed Mr. Wilkes' company.

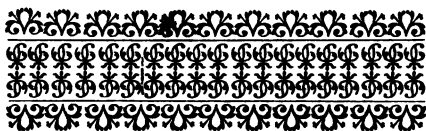
* * *

On a subsequent occasion Johnson and Wilkes again met at the dinner table of Mr. Dilly. The subject of Scotland again gave cause for merriment, chiefly at the expense of Boswell and Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen, author of "The Minstrel." Boswell was asked how much an advocate could make at the Scottish bar. He answered, about £2000. Wilkes asked, "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?" On which Johnson interposed with what he said was a harder question, "If one man in Scotland gets possession of £2000, what could remain for the rest of the nation?" Wilkes said, "You know in the last war the immense booty which Thurot

carried off by the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles ; he re-embarked with three and sixpence ! ”

All this seems now rather small talk, but the simplicity of Boswell in putting this raillery on record is highly amusing. The same may be said about the familiar jokes as to oats being the food of horses in England and of men in Scotland ; the loss of Johnson’s stick in the Isle of Mull past all recovering, “ considering the value of such a piece of timber there ; ” and many such jests, in spite of all which every Scotchman delights in Johnson’s Scottish Tour.





LUXURY HAS BENEFITS.

MANY cry out against the evil of luxury. Now, the truth is that luxury produces much good. A man gives half a guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? How many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said gravely, "Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal?" Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor, whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor. You are much surer that you are doing

good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompense of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity.



GRATIFICATION AT SEEING ONE'S
WORKS.

WHEN viewing Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, during his Derbyshire tour, the Doctor espied the small edition of the Dictionary in his lordship's dressing-room. He showed it to Boswell with some eagerness, saying, "Look ye, *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?*" Observing also Goldsmith's "Animated Nature," he said, "Here's our friend! The poor doctor would have been happy to hear of this!"



GOLDSMITH'S WISH FOR NEW MEM-
BERS AT THE CLUB.

GOLDSMITH once said that he wished they had some new members at the Club to give variety, "for,"

said he, "there can be nothing new among us, we have travelled over one another's minds." Johnson seemed a little angry, and said, "Sir, you have not travelled over my mind, I promise you." Sir Joshua, however, thought Goldsmith was right, as when people are much together they usually know what each will say on every ordinary subject of conversation.



DR. YOUNG OF THE NIGHT
THOUGHTS.

THE admiration of Young and Johnson was mutual and warm. Young said of *Rasselas* that the book was "one mass of good sense." Johnson said of the "Night Thoughts" that it "exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflection and striking allusions," and that it was "one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage."

WORKS OF FICTION.

SPEAKING of the sameness in writers of novels he said, "There is very small quantity of real fiction in the world ; and the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authors who have ever written."

**RICHARD BAXTER.**

BOSWELL asked what works of Baxter he should read. He said, "Read any of them ; they are all good."

**A MEDICAL FOP.**

A FOPPISH physician once reminded Johnson of his having been in company with him on a former occasion. "I do not remember it, sir." The physician still insisted, adding that he that day wore so fine a coat that it must have attracted his notice. "Sir," said Johnson, "had you been dipped in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you."

FINE COATS.

THE mention of a fine coat by the medical fop recalls the strange costumes fashionable in those days. The first time Johnson met Wilkes, at a dinner party given by Mr. Dilly the bookseller, while the guests were assembling Johnson asked, "Who is that with the lace coat?" It was Jack Wilkes, who usually assumed the garb and airs of "a fine gentleman." When Goldsmith once got some money his first purchase was a gay plum-coloured coat!



CLASSICAL QUOTATIONS.

THE subject of quoting well-known authors being introduced, Wilkes censured it as pedantry. Johnson said, "No, sir; it is a good thing; there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world."



PLACES FOR WORSHIP.

TALKING of devotion he said, "Though it be true that 'God dwelleth not in a temple made with hands,' yet in this state of being our minds are more piously affected in places appropriated to divine worship than in other places. Some people have a particular room in their houses where they say their prayers; of which I do not disapprove, as it may animate their devotion."

HUME'S ARGUMENT AGAINST
MIRACLES.

TALKING of Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, or things contrary to the ordinary course of nature, Boswell said, "Sir, you come very near Hume's argument against miracles; that it is more probable witnesses should be deceived or lie than that miracles should happen." Johnson said, "Why, sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right. But a Christian

revelation is not proved by miracles alone, but as connected with the prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which miracles were wrought."



JOHNSON'S OPINION OF HUME.

BOSWELL having mentioned that he was much shocked by David Hume persisting in his infidelity when he was dying, Johnson said, "Why should it shock you, sir? Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right." Boswell said he had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. *Johnson*: "It was not so, sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy.

It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease than so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go) into an unknown state, and not being uneasy."



BOLINGBROKE.

WHEN Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works appeared, edited by David Mallet, Johnson spoke with great indignation of the writer on account of his infidel principles: "Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward; a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."



THE HEADS ON TEMPLE BAR.

JOHNSON and Goldsmith being once together in Westminster Abbey, in

surveying Poets' Corner, Johnson said, "Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis." "When we got to Temple Bar," says Johnson, "Goldsmith stopped me, pointed to the heads of rebels upon it, and silyly whispered me, 'Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur *istis*.'" "



DRINKING AND INTEMPERANCE.

BOSWELL, one of whose failings was love of wine to excess, frequently led Johnson to talk on the subject, sometimes with the hope of finding excuse for his own convivial tastes. He generally got severely handled on such occasions. Once he resolutely ventured to defend the habit of indulgence in wine, quoting the phrase *in vino veritas*, seeing that a man well warmed with wine will speak truth. "Why, sir," said Johnson, "that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long

as he his sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him."



BEGONE, DULL CARE!

BOSWELL said that "drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would you not allow a man to drink for that reason?" "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "if he sat next to you." Poor Bozzy!



PLEASURE OR HAPPINESS.

TEMPERANCE in drinking was the subject of talk one night at the club. Johnson said he did not leave off drinking wine because he could not bear it, he had drank three bottles of port at the university without being the worse for it. "But," he said, "it is better for a man never to lose the power over himself." He was reminded that he had said that not to drink wine was a deduction from life.

He replied, "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure ; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. When we talk of pleasure we mean sensual pleasure. Pleasure, as philosophers tell you, is contrary to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure."



TEMPERANCE AND ABSTINENCE.

TALKING of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine from moral and religious considerations, he said, "We must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me than for the dog that is under the table." He said he "had no objection to a man's drinking wine if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it on account of illness, I thought it better not to

return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects he experiences."

Johnson continued his temperate habits—in fact, complete abstinence—till the last, his drink at the club being usually lemonade.



LAW AS A PROFESSION.

IN conversation about the legal profession in England he said, "You must not indulge in too sanguine hopes should you be called to our bar. I was told by a very sensible lawyer that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law ; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get practice so few. He said it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he indeed allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known ; and he would get forward ; but that the

great risk was, that a man might pass half a lifetime in the courts, and never have an opportunity of showing his abilities."

* *

Sir William Scott, upon the death of Lord Lichfield, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, said to Johnson, "What a pity it is, sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law. You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Lichfield, your native city, is extinct, you might have had it." Johnson upon this seemed much agitated, and in an angry tone exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this when it is too late?" This was in 1778, when he was 69.



CONVERSATION.

FOR conversation," Johnson said, "there must, in the first place, be knowledge; there must be materials: in

the second place, there must be command of words: in the third place, there must be imagination, to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in; and in the fourth place, there must be presence of mind, and a resolution that is not to be overcome by failures. This last is an essential requisite; for want of it many people do not excel in conversation. Now I want it; I throw up the game upon losing a trick." Boswell remarked, "I don't know, sir, how this may be; but I am sure you beat other people's cards out of their hands." Johnson did not hear this remark, or, if he did, took no notice of the impertinence.

* *

Though his usual phrase for conversation was *talk*, yet he made a distinction, for he once told Boswell that "he had dined the day before at a friend's house, with a very pretty company." Being asked if there was

good conversation, he answered, "No, sir ; we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation* ; there was nothing *discussed*."



EDMUND BURKE.

HE said of Burke that "you could not stand five minutes with that man beneath a shed while it rained, but you must be convinced you had been standing with the greatest man you had ever seen."



JUNIUS.

TALKING of the wonderful concealment of the author of the celebrated letters signed Junius, he said, "I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters ; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different had I asked him if he was the author ; a man so questioned, as to an anonymous publication, may think he has a right to deny it."

OCEAN.

A GENTLEMAN told Johnson that a friend, looking into the Dictionary, could not find the word *ocean*. "Not find ocean?" said the lexicographer, stalking into the library to see if he had possibly made the omission; and then, rapidly turning the leaves, pointed triumphantly to the word: "There, sir; there is *ocean*! But never mind it, sir; perhaps your friend spells *ocean* with an *s*."



DR. PARR.

AT the first interview of this learned scholar with Dr. Johnson, they got very warm in an argument. The subject was the liberty of the press. "While Johnson was arguing," says Parr, "I observed that he stamped. Upon this I stamped. Dr. Johnson said, 'Why did you stamp, Dr. Parr?' I replied, 'Sir, because you stamped; and I was resolved not to give you the advantage even of a *stamp* in the argument.'"

Parr soon showed the highest esteem and veneration for Johnson, and expressed this in many ways. In recommending to a friend the study of the posthumous volume of the Doctor's Prayers and Meditations, he described them as "the thoughts which passed through the mind of the wisest and best of men when he communed with his own heart, and poured forth his supplication before the throne of Heaven for mercy and for grace." It was Parr who wrote the Latin epitaph recorded on Johnson's monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.



OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

IN Johnson's last illness, he said to his friend Mr. Nicholls, "Take care of your eternal salvation. Remember to observe the Sabbath. Let it never be a day of business, nor wholly a day of dissipation. Let my words have their due weight. They are the words of a dying man." He

had spoken in the same strain to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who gave his promise never to follow his calling on Sunday. David Cox used to mention Reynolds as an honourable example in this respect to young artists.



LIFE OF A CLERGYMAN.

MEETING with an old college friend, Edwards of Pembroke, now a lawyer, Edwards said he regretted he had not continued at college, as he should have been a parson, and had a good living, and lived an easier and more comfortable life. Johnson took him up instantly. "Sir, the life of a parson, of a conscientious clergyman, is not easy. I have always considered a clergyman as the father of a larger family than he is able to maintain. I would rather have a chancery suit on my hands than the cure of souls. No, sir, I do not envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life."

In the same spirit he wrote to a young clergyman in the country an excellent letter of advice, which he thus concludes: "All means must be tried by which souls may be saved. Talk to your people as much as you can; and you will find the more frequently you converse with them on religious subjects, the more willingly they will attend, and the more submissively they will learn. A clergyman's diligence always makes him venerable. I think I have now only to say that in the momentous work you have undertaken, I pray God to bless you." This letter was written from Bolt Court, August 30, 1780.



PREACHING.

TALKING of preaching, and of the great success of John Wesley and the Methodists, he said, "Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the

common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty ; a practice for which they will be praised by men of sense. To insist against drunkenness as a crime because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people; but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and show them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression."



A WOMAN PREACHING.

BOSWELL told him one Sunday that he had been to a meeting of the people called Friends, or Quakers, and heard a woman preach. "Sir," said Johnson, "a woman's preaching is like a dog walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised that it is done at all."



DAVID GARRICK.

SOON after the formation of the Literary Club, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of it to Garrick, who said, "I like it much. I think I shall be of you." When this was told to Johnson he was much displeased. "He'll be of us! How does he know we will permit him? The first duke in England has no right to use such language." However, when Garrick was regularly proposed some years afterwards, Johnson warmly and kindly supported him, and he became a most agreeable member, attending to the time of his death.

* *

To Mrs. Siddons, in the interview he had with her in 1783, he said, "Garrick was no declaimer; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken *To be or not to be*, better than he did; yet he was the only actor I ever saw whom I could call a master both in tragedy and

comedy, though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguishing excellences."

**LORD CHATHAM.**

LORD CHATHAM was a dictator. He possessed the power of putting the State in motion ; now there is no power : all order is relaxed " (1778).

**JOHN WESLEY.**

JOHN WESLEY'S conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."



He said, "John Wesley can talk well on any subject." Boswell asked what he thought of a ghost story to which Wesley gave credit, and which was making much controversy at the

time. Johnson said, "Charles Wesley, who is a much more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry John did not take more pains to inquire into the evidence for it."



BOSWELL AND JOHN WESLEY.

BOSWELL wished to be introduced to Wesley, and Johnson wrote this letter: "Sir, Mr. Boswell, a gentleman who has been long known to me, is desirous of being known to you, and has asked this recommendation, which I give him with great willingness, because I think it very much to be wished that worthy and religious men should be acquainted with each other. I am, sir, your humble servant, Samuel Johnson." Mr. Wesley was, in the course of his ministry, then at Edinburgh (May, 1779), and on this letter being presented, received Boswell very politely. Boswell's wish for the introduction was chiefly to ask about the Newcastle-on-Tyne ghost story!

GHOSTS.

TALKING of ghosts, he said, "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it ; but all belief is for it."



THE COCK LANE GHOST.

AS the general opinion is that Johnson was weakly credulous on this subject, it may be well to state his real opinions. Churchill, in his satirical poem, "The Ghost," made unworthy use of the credulity ascribed to Johnson, and under the name of Pomposo represented him as one of the chief believers in the celebrated Cock Lane ghost. Whereas Johnson was one of the chief detectors of the imposture, along with Dr. Douglas, the Bishop

of Salisbury; and he wrote an account of the deception in the newspapers, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.



APPARITIONS POSSIBLE.

HE admitted that all such questions were fit subjects for inquiry and of testimony. He said "he knew one friend, who was an honest and sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost—old Mr. Edward Cave, the printer, at St. John's Gate. You have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions." He discussed the subject more fully in "Rasselas," and in the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides."



FANCY AND FACT AS TO GHOSTS.

THE following statement appears in a conversation with Boswell. He said, "I make a distinction between what a man may experience by mere strength of his imagination, and what

imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice say, 'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished,' my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed on my mind, that I might imagine I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me."

He said of apparitions, "A total disbelief of them is adverse to the opinion of the existence of the soul between death and the last day; the

question simply is, whether departed spirits ever have the power of making themselves perceptible to us. A man who thinks he has seen an apparition can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another; and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means."

* * *

On this occasion Johnson discoursed on the curious phenomenon of persons being *called*, that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice of a known person at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being actually heard. The Doctor said that "one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call *Sam*. She was then at Lichfield, but nothing came of it." Cases are frequently mentioned of such calls, though not so frequently as of apparitions to the sight. Boswell told of a

friend who heard his name distinctly called by a brother who had gone to America. The next packet brought accounts of that brother's death.



RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

WITH regard to the resurrection of the dead Dr. Johnson said that Scripture clearly taught that we shall not be raised with the same bodies (1 Cor. xv.). He said to Mrs. Hall, John Wesley's sister, "You cannot suppose that we shall rise with a diseased body; it is enough if there be such a sameness as to distinguish identity of persons."



LIFE AT AN INN.

JOHNSON often spoke with satisfaction of tavern life. "There is no private house," he said, "in which people can enjoy themselves so well as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever

so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy, in the nature of things it cannot be : there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests—the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him ; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it was his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome ; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or

inn." He then repeated with great emotion Shenstone's lines :

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.



**THE "THREE CROWNS" AT
LICHFIELD.**

WHEN Johnson took Boswell to Lichfield in 1776, they put up at the "Three Crowns"—not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, kept by a Mr. Wilkins, and was next door to the house where Johnson was born and brought up. There was much interest in the town, and hospitality pressed on them, but Johnson preferred staying at the "Three Crowns," and thoroughly enjoyed it.



One of the houses visited by the Doctor when at Lichfield was that of Mrs. Gastrel, widow of the clergyman who was barbarian enough to cut down

Shakespeare's mulberry tree at Stratford-on-Avon, because he was annoyed by the numbers of people coming to look at it! Mrs. Gastrel was sister to Lady Aston, one of whose daughters, known as a London toast, Molly Aston, was an early flame of Johnson, and afterwards married Captain Brodie of the Navy. Her picture by Sir Joshua was in the winter exhibition at Burlington House in 1883-4.

Boswell has recorded many of the things said by Johnson in this Lichfield visit, when in company with Peter Garrick, Canon Seward, Mistress Lucy Porter, Dr. Taylor, and other friendly and hospitable residents of the old city.



PRAISE NOT ALWAYS SERVICEABLE.

TO Dr. Taylor he made a singular remark. He was commending a physician, who was thought skilful but not popular. "Many a battle I fight for him," said Dr. Taylor, "as many people

in the country dislike him." Johnson said he was wrong in thus praising him in argument. "You should consider, sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the battle will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him; whereas, if people get the better of you in argument, they are pleased, and think, We'll send for Dr. — nevertheless." It was a shrewd and useful hint in the unpopular doctor's favour.



DRESS AS INCREASING RESPECT.

IT was at Dr. Taylor's also that Boswell brought down a scolding upon himself in a conversation about dress. He had been arguing as to the almost invariable effect of good dress in increasing respect. Johnson said, "No, sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles XII., think you, less respected

for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." Boswell here unwisely interposed, "Would not *you*, sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" To which the Doctor replied, "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*." Poor Bozzy apologized by saying, "I mentioned you, sir, as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress."



JOHNSON'S DISREGARD OF DRESS.

BOSWELL was right, so far as the avoidance of what was disagreeable was concerned, if not increase of respect. Johnson was sometimes a sad sloven. At Mrs. Thrale's a footman always had "a company wig" ready to replace

the Doctor's rugged and often singed covering, when going to the drawing-room or dining-room. The scene at the Temple, when he lodged there, is a familiar one, the Doctor being ludicrously described as seeing one visitor to her carriage in a miserable dressing-gown and with wig a-wry. But it was from carelessness not from defiance of propriety that these improprieties were witnessed. Frank Barber, the black valet, must surely be most to blame for allowing his master to get into such slovenly habits. Of Johnson's sense of propriety as to dress let one instance be given. Goldsmith's last comedy was to be produced, and Mr. Steevens made appointment to call on him and carry him to the tavern where they and other friends of the author were to dine. The Doctor was ready, but in coloured clothes, unaware or forgetting that it was a time when society was in Court-mourning. Being told that every one would be in

black, he was profusely thankful to Steevens for telling him; hastened to change his attire, and reiterating his gratitude for being prevented from the unseemly appearance which he would have made in the front row of a front box! "I would not for ten pounds," he added, "have seemed so retrograde to any general observance."



JOHNSON'S COMPANY MANNERS.

ON proper occasions he was rather scrupulous as to the propriety of dress, and his manners in company were often studiously yet not obtrusively polite. With ladies he was generally a favourite, and his compliments and flatteries were sometimes most happy. At the time that Miss Linley was in her highest fame as a singer, Johnson came in the evening to drink tea with Miss Reynolds, and when he entered the room she said to him, "See, Dr. Johnson, what a preference I give to

your company, for I had an offer of a place in a box at the Oratorio to hear Miss Linley; but I would rather sit with you than hear Miss Linley sing." "And I, madam," replied Johnson, "would rather sit with you than sit upon a throne." He was not to be outdone even in a trifling compliment!



GALLANTRY TO LADIES.

TO blind Mrs. Williams, and Mrs. Desmoulins, and other ladies of humble position, he always showed the most kind and considerate courtesy and kindness. His reference to Mrs. Williams, in a letter to Mrs. Lucy Porter, the year before his own death, is very touching. Having spoken of the death of Mr. Porter, he says, "Death has likewise visited my mournful habitation. Last month died Mrs. Williams, who had been to me for thirty years in the place of a sister. Her knowledge was great, and her

conversation pleasing. I now live in cheerless solitude." This was written from Bolt Court, Nov. 10, 1783.



MRS. WILLIAMS.

TOPHAM BEAUCLERK once said to him, "Doctor, why do you keep that blind woman in your house?" "Why, sir," answered Johnson, "she was a friend of my poor wife, and was in the house with her when she died. And so, sir, as I could not find it in my heart to desire her to quit my house, poor thing! she has remained in it ever since."



MRS. THRALE.

BOSWELL has preserved many lively sallies of Johnson in conversation with the leading wits and beauties of the time. With Mrs. Thrale he had more tender relations, for he evidently came to regard the bright and lively widow with more than Platonic affection. We

gather this from his letters, and not merely from the disgust which he felt on her marrying the worthy Signor Piozzi, her singing-master. Her vanity having been sufficiently gratified by having the Colossus of literature attached to her for many years, she gradually became less assiduous in pleasing him. He soon saw that his presence at Streatham was no longer welcome, and he bade the place a last farewell, not without feelings of gratitude, and the expression of pious wishes for the family. When he was actually told of the marriage with Piozzi, he was dumb with surprise for some moments; at last recovering himself, he exclaimed with emotion, "*Varium et mutabile semper fœmina.*"



SECOND MARRIAGES.

MADAME PIOZZI'S was certainly not one of those second marriages which Johnson thought of when he said, in reply to Boswell's remark

that a widower marrying showed disregard of his first wife. "No, sir, not at all. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man that he wishes to be so the second time." This argument, we suppose, would be stronger for a third or fourth marriage! At least, it applies equally to both widowers and widows.



MRS. JOHNSON.

JOHNSON'S affection for his own wife was of almost romantic intensity, in spite of her being old enough to have been his mother. He seemed to forget all externals of age and form, for his friends saw little to cause such marked attachment; shown even to his latest life, in his affectionate

recollections of his "Tetty," and even his prayers for her, always with the proviso that prayers for the departed were lawful. On one occasion he owned that he had once almost sought a promise from Mrs. Johnson not to marry again, should she survive him! As Boswell says, "he seems to have wholly overlooked the prior claim of the honest Birmingham trader, Mr. Porter, whose widow she was."

**SIGNOR PIOZZI.**

RETURNING to Mrs. Piozzi, it is only fair to add that she appears to have been happy with the Italian singer, of whom Anna Seward says, "Johnson did not tell me the truth when he asserted that Piozzi was an ugly dog, without particular skill in his profession. Mr. Piozzi is a handsome man, in middle life, with gentle, pleasing, and unaffected manners, and with very eminent skill in his profession."

Though he has not a powerful or fine-toned voice, he sings with transcendent grace and expression. Surely the finest sensibilities must vibrate through his frame, since they breath so sweetly through his song !”



THE GAME OF DRAUGHTS.

AT college Johnson was very fond of playing at draughts, a game which he said was sufficient to fix the attention without straining it. After beginning the struggle of life, he gave too little time to any such relaxations. When Mr. Payne, brother of the bookseller of that name, published a treatise on draughts, Johnson contributed a Preface, and a Dedication to Lord Rochford. In this he says, “Triflers may find or make any thing a trifle ; but since it is the great characteristic of a wise man to see events in their causes, to obviate consequences, and ascertain contingencies, your lordship will think nothing a trifle by which the mind is

inured to caution, foresight, and circumspection."



TEA.

EVERY one has heard of Johnson's vast appetite for tea. In his Reply to Jonas Hanway's "Essay on Tea, and its Pernicious Consequences," the Doctor describes himself as "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for many years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant ; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool ; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning."



TO BE CONTINUED.

MR. SWINTON, chaplain of the Oxford gaol, a learned but often thoughtless and absent man, preached the "condemnation sermon" one Sunday on repentance, before some convicts who were to be executed next day. At the close he said he would continue

the subject next Lord's day. One of the company at a dinner when this was mentioned, by way of apology for Mr. Swinton, said he had probably preached the same sermon before the University. "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "but the University were not going to be hanged next morning."



**MRS. MACAULAY, THE REPUBLICAN
HISTORIAN.**

JOHNSON had a great antipathy to Mrs. Macaulay, daughter of Alderman Sawbridge, and author of a Whig, or rather Republican, history of England under the Stuarts. The book is still worthy of reference, as it contains a very full account of the Long Parliament and of the Commonwealth men. One day at her house, which was a resort of literary persons, Johnson said, "'Madam, I am now a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are on an equal footing. To convince you that I

am in earnest, there is your footman, a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen ; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine at table with us.' I thus, sir, showed the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves ; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves."



PLAYERS.

ALTHOUGH Johnson had great regard for Garrick personally, he often spoke with contempt of his profession. Boswell said, "Surely, sir, we respect a great player as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments and can express them gracefully." *Johnson* : "What, sir ; a fellow who claps a hump upon his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, ' I am Richard the Third ' ? Nay, sir, a ballad singer is a higher man, for he does two things, he repeats and he sings. There is

both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites." Boswell argued that Garrick must have high excellence, as he had made £100,000. *Johnson*: "Is getting £100,000 a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary." All this was mere talk for arguing sake, for Johnson at other times spoke highly of Garrick's art. Who does not remember the famous words in the "Lives of the Poets," "His death eclipsed the gaiety of nations." When once questioned by Boswell as to the propriety of so strong a eulogy, he said, "I could not have said more or less. It is the truth, *eclipsed* not *extinguished*; and his death *did* eclipse, it was like a storm." *Boswell*: "But why nations? Did his gaiety extend farther than his own nation?" *Johnson*: "Why, sir, some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, nations may be said—if we allow the Scotch to be a nation—to have gaiety

—which *they* have not. *You* are an exception, though. Come, gentlemen, let us candidly admit that there is one Scotchman who is cheerful.”

Boswell also criticized the words about Garrick's death as having diminished the stock of harmless pleasure. “Is not harmless pleasure,” he said, “very tame?” Johnson replied, “Nay, sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise. Pleasure is a word of dubious import; pleasure is, in general, dangerous, and pernicious to virtue; to be able, therefore, to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great power as man can possess.” This explanation Boswell thought ingenious but not satisfactory.



OSSIAN.

THE authenticity of the poems of Ossian was frequently under discussion, and the subject is wearisome. The truth about it is now admitted to be that Macpherson skilfully adopted

some of the floating traditions of the old Celtic bards and minstrels. Johnson's strenuous assertions were directed mainly against the existence of manuscripts, which Macpherson maintained to exist. "He and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have had none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown, if they exist, but they were never shown. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est ratio*. No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But whatever he has he never offered to show."

* * *

"Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind ; but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer—that I would not

be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian—put an end to the correspondence.”



STUDY IN EARLY LIFE.

IN my early years I read very hard.

It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgment, to be sure, was not so good, but I had all the facts. I remember very well when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, “Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge ; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome taste.”



JOHNSON'S ROUGHNESS OF SPEECH.

SOME one censuring Johnson's general rudeness in society, Burke replied, “It is well when a man comes to die, that he has nothing worse to

accuse himself of than some harshness in conversation." Goldsmith said of him, "He has nothing of the bear but the skin."



INFLUENCE OF TRADE ON
CHARACTER.

THERE are no qualities in trade that should entitle a man to superiority. It is quite true that we can suppose a merchant to be a man of an enlarged mind, such as Addison in the *Spectator* describes Sir Andrew Freeport to have been. We may suppose any factitious character; we may suppose a philosophical day-labourer, who is happy in reflecting that, by his labour, he contributes to the support of his fellow-creatures; but we find no such philosophical day-labourer. A merchant may, perhaps, be a man of an enlarged mind; but there is nothing in trade connected with an enlarged mind.

SEA LIFE.

JOHNSON often spoke of the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniences of every kind ; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land."

**A HATTER IN THE BOROUGH.**

JOHNSON'S learning and talents kept him always in the upper ranks of society, but he never lost his sympathy with the lower classes, whose pains and pleasures he had once shared. When Mr. Thrale was candidate for the Borough of Southwark, Johnson entered with great spirit into the canvassing, which was rather rough work in those times. A hatter, seeing the Doctor's beaver to be somewhat rusty, seized it with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the



other, said, "Ah, Master Johnson, this is no time to be thinking about *hats*." "No, no, sir," said the Doctor good-humouredly, "hats are of no use now, as you say, except to throw up in the air and huzza with," accompanying his words with a boisterous hooray !



DR. GOLDSMITH.

NO man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had." This reminds us of the epigrammatic jest about King James I., "that he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one."



TALKATIVE LADIES.

IN conversation with a very talkative lady, of whom he appeared to take little notice, "Why, Doctor," she said, "I believe you prefer the company of men to that of the ladies." "Madam," he replied, "I am very fond of the company of ladies ; I like their beauty,

I like their delicacy, I like their vivacity, and I like their *silence*."



OSBORNE THE BOOKSELLER.

THE story has often been told of the Doctor knocking down Osborne in his shop with a folio. The truth was, as he told Boswell, "Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him. But it was not in his shop; it was at my own house." Mrs. Thrale also asked him to tell about this, and he said, "There is nothing to tell, dearest lady, but that he was insolent and I beat him, and that he was a blockhead and I told him of it. I have beat many a fellow, but the rest had the wit to hold their tongues."



IRELAND.

JOHNSON always expressed repugnance to visit Ireland. "It is the last place where I should wish to travel," he said to Boswell, when urg-

ing him to make a tour there. *Boswell*: "Should you not like to see Dublin, sir?" *Johnson*: "No, sir; Dublin is only a worse capital." *Boswell*: "Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?" *Johnson*: "Worth seeing? Yes, but not worth going to see." Perhaps the difficulty of getting to Ireland in those days had something to do with this repugnance. Mr. Edgeworth was once detained for some weeks, by contrary winds preventing him crossing the Channel.



PERSONAL REMARKS AND
QUESTIONS.

NEVER speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate and may be offensive.

* *

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts

of his life which he may not wish to have made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."



FRENCHMEN.

FOR Frenchmen, and for foreigners generally, he had the contempt common in England, from ignorance and prejudice. When complimented for doing his Dictionary sooner and better than the forty Academicians did theirs, "Why, what would you expect, sir," said he, "from fellows who eat frogs?" Lord Palmerston's remark about the Turks was as good, "What can you expect from fellows who go about all day in slippers?"



An eminent Frenchman when shown through the British Museum was troublesome with many absurd inquiries. Johnson heard of it, and said, "Now there, sir, is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman.

A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows anything of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say."

* *

Hearing a number of foreigners talking loud at Slaughter's coffee-house about trifles, he said, "Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation, 'For anything I see, foreigners are fools!'"



JOHNSON AS AN ATHLETE.

JOHNSON was a man of great muscular power, and even when of abnormal size from his sedentary habits, he retained much of his early athletic vigour. In his last visit to Lichfield, he went to see a rail that he used to jump over when a boy, and was so fortunate as to find it. "I gazed upon it," he told a friend, "for some time with rapture, for it brought to my mind all my juvenile sports and

pastimes, and at length I determined to try my skill and dexterity. I laid aside my hat and wig, pulled off my coat, and leapt over it twice." This was only three years before his death ! He sometimes rode Mr. Thrale's old hunter with great firmness, and though he would follow the hounds sometimes fifty miles on end, he would never own himself either tired or amused by the sport. He was much pleased, however, when Mr. Hamilton called out one day on the downs at Brighton, "Why, Johnson rides as well as the most illiterate fellow in England."

Stories were current of his prodigious feats of strength. Garrick told how at Lichfield an insolent fellow having planted himself where he had no right to be, at a public entertainment, and refusing to move, Johnson took him up, chair and all, and threw him into the pit. Two fierce dogs began to fight in a room, to the alarm of the company. Johnson took one

by the back of the neck, and opening the window with his other hand, threw the dog into the street. A porter came into collision with him in Covent Garden, and was inclined to resent the supposed attack, but eyeing the Doctor's huge frame, he walked away. It was probably the rumour of his strength as well as determination, that cowed Foote when he was about to ridicule the Doctor on the stage. Johnson heard of it, and, before a friend of Foote, asked how much he must pay for a good oak cudgel. Being told, one shilling, he said he would get a two-shilling stick, to give the fellow a better beating. Foote had the prudence to withdraw the farce.



FOOTE.

JOHNSON disliked Foote, and had a low estimate of his character, but acknowledged his unrivalled wit and comic power. "The first time

I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible."



JOHNSON'S AGILITY.

WHEN there was "no fool by" he rejoiced in romping and playing with the families of his intimate friends. He was great at "hop, step, and jump;" and few could beat him in a short race. On one occasion he proposed a race with his old friend Payne, the bookseller, afterwards chief accountant of the Bank of England. Payne was very active, but a little man, and Johnson's strides made the contest doubtful. Whether he feared defeat,

or whether he did it in exuberance of fun, at about half the distance he caught Payne up in his arms, and placed him high in the arm of an adjoining tree, and then continued running as if he had met with a hard match. He then returned, and amidst much merriment released his friend from the not very pleasant position to which he had been exalted.



TOLERATION.

EVERY man has a right of liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking, nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases, for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what

the society holds to be true. The magistrate as representing society may be wrong in what he thinks ; but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks."



**LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE AND
LIBERTY OF TEACHING.**

IN company with Seward and Boswell, Johnson, being asked if he would restrain private conversation as well as public teaching, said, "It is difficult to say when private conversation begins and when it ends. If we three were to discuss even the great question concerning the existence of a Supreme Being by ourselves, we should not be restrained, for that would put an end to all improvement. But if we should discuss it in the presence of ten boarding-school girls, and as many boys, I think the magistrate would do well to put us in the stocks, to finish the debate there."

VALUING THRALE'S BREWERY.

JOHNSON was one of Mr. Thrale's executors ; Lord Lucan records the following characteristic scene and speech. When the sale of the brewery was preparing, Johnson appeared, bustling about with an inkhorn and pen at his button-hole, like an exciseman ; and on being asked what he really conceived to be the value of the property, he replied, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice."



RIGHT USE OF MONEY.

A MAN cannot make a bad use of money, so far as regards society, if he do not hoard it; for if he either spends it, or lends it out, society has the benefit. It is in general better to spend money than to give it away ; for industry is more promoted by spending

money than by giving it away. A man who spends his money is sure he is doing some good with it; he is not sure when he gives it away. A man who spends ten thousand a year will do more good than a man who spends two thousand and gives away eight.



ACTION IN ORATORY.

THE saying of the ancient rhetorician that action was the first, second, and third element in oratory is a foolish saying. "Action," said Johnson, "can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it can never enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them." Johnson is so far right, but the majority of any audience are not reasonable minds, swayed by argument only.

THE MEDITERRANEAN.

THE grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world—the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean.”



BOOKS OF TRAVEL.

BOOKS of travel will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind; his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another. As the Spanish proverb says, ‘He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.’ So it is in travelling: a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge.”

DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

THE peculiar doctrine of Christianity is that of an universal sacrifice and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets only proclaimed the will of God and the threatenings of God. Christ satisfied His justice."



GENIUS.

TRUE genius is a mind of large general powers accidentally determined to some particular direction.

* *

Those who are willing to attribute everything to genius independent of education are encouraged in this opinion by laziness or pride, being willing to forego the labour of accurate reading and tedious inquiry, and to satisfy themselves and others with illustrious examples.

* *

A man may write at any time if he will set himself doggedly to do it.

NOT UNDERSTANDING AN
ARGUMENT.

JOHNSON had been arguing with an opponent who happened to say, "I don't understand you, sir." On which the Doctor observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument, but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."



FOOTE AND GARRICK.

JOHNSON told a witty satirical story of Foote. He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. "You may be surprised," said he, "that I allow him to be so near my gold ; but you will observe he has no hands."



GARRICK'S ALLEGED PARSIMONY.

GARRICK would refuse a box to a friend if he expected the house to be full, and showed parsimony in many little ways. But Johnson said that no one was more generous in

giving. "Yes, sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. He was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he was probably unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion that the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. They have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."



MARRYING AN HEIRESS.

SOME one remarking that a woman married for money usually proved very expensive. Johnson said, "Depend upon it, sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune, being used to the handling of money, spends it judi-

ously ; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."



CHARITABLE SPIRIT GROWS WITH
AGE.

AS I know more of mankind I expect less of them, and am ready now to call a man a good man upon easier terms than I was formerly.



" I always was struck with this sentence in Thomas à Kempis, ' Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.' Si non potes te talem facere qualem vis, quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere beneplacitum ?" (*De Imit. Christi*, I. c. 16).

WOMEN'S CLAIMS OF RIGHTS.

WOMEN have all the liberty they should wish to have. We have all the labour and the danger, and the women all the advantage. We go to sea, we build houses, we do everything, in short, to pay our court to the women." Mrs. Knowles still objecting to men claiming superiority, the Doctor said, "It is plain, madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakespeare says, 'If two ride on a horse, one must ride behind.'"



ECCENTRIC LOVE OF DISTINCTION.

MEETING a gentleman driving six small ponies, which many stopped to admire, Johnson said, "Why does nobody begin the fashion of driving six spavined horses, all spavined of the same leg? It would have a mighty pretty effect, and produce the distinction of doing something worse than the common way."

AN UNLETTERED TALKER.

A GENTLEMAN lamenting that he had lost all his Greek, the Doctor said, "I believe, sir, it happened at the same time that I lost all my large estate in Yorkshire."



ABUSIVE CRITICISMS.

HE had no concern about public abuse from critics. "Those fellows," he said, "are only advertising my books—it is surely better a man should be abused than forgotten."



EARLY TRAINING IN THRIFT.

DO not discourage your children from hoarding, if they have a taste for it," he said to Mrs. Thrāle; "whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake, at least is not the slave of gross appetite; and besides shows a preference, always to be esteemed, of the future for the present moment. Such a mind may make

a good one; but the natural spendthrift, who grasps his pleasure greedily and coarsely, and cares for nothing but immediate indulgence, is very little to be valued above a negro."



A CONSOLATION FOR A JEALOUS
AUTHOR.

TO Goldsmith, who seemed vexed at the popularity of Dr. Beattie's "Essay on Truth," saying, "Here is such a stir about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many," the Doctor observed, "There go two and forty sixpences to one guinea."



DISLIKE OF FLATTERY.

TO a lady praising him with too much zeal, which always offended him, he said, "Madam, consider what your flattery is worth before you choke me with it."

Talking with Mrs. Thrale about Richardson's "Clarissa," he said, "You think that I like flattery, and so I do; but a little too much always disgusts me. On the contrary, that fellow Richardson could not be contented to sail quietly down the stream of reputation without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar."



REBUKE TO GARRULITY.

OF a naturalist who had discoursed largely on the natural history of the mouse he said, "I wonder what the fellow would have said if he had ever the luck to see a lion!"

* * *

On another occasion he said, "I am sorry if I vexed the creature, for there is certainly no harm in a fellow's rattling a rattle-box, only don't let him think that he thunders."



BIOGRAPHY.

THERE has perhaps never passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful. For not only every man has, in the mighty mass of the world, great numbers in the same condition with himself, to whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would be of immediate and apparent use ; but there is such an uniformity in the state of man, considered apart from adventitious circumstances, that there is scarce any possibility of good or ill but is common to human kind.



DULNESS AND PLAINNESS.

DULNESS or deformity are not in themselves to be blamed, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty.



CONVENTS.

THOSE who cannot resist temptation, and find they make themselves worse by being in the world, without making it better, may retire. . . . But I think putting young people there who know nothing of life, nothing of retirement, is dangerous and wicked. If convents should be allowed at all, they should only be retreats for persons unable to serve the public, or who have served it.

* * *

Johnson said once to the lady abbess of a convent, "Madam, you are here not for the love of virtue, but from the fear of vice," a remark which she said she would remember as long as she lived.

FRIENDS OF EARLY AND LATER
LIFE.

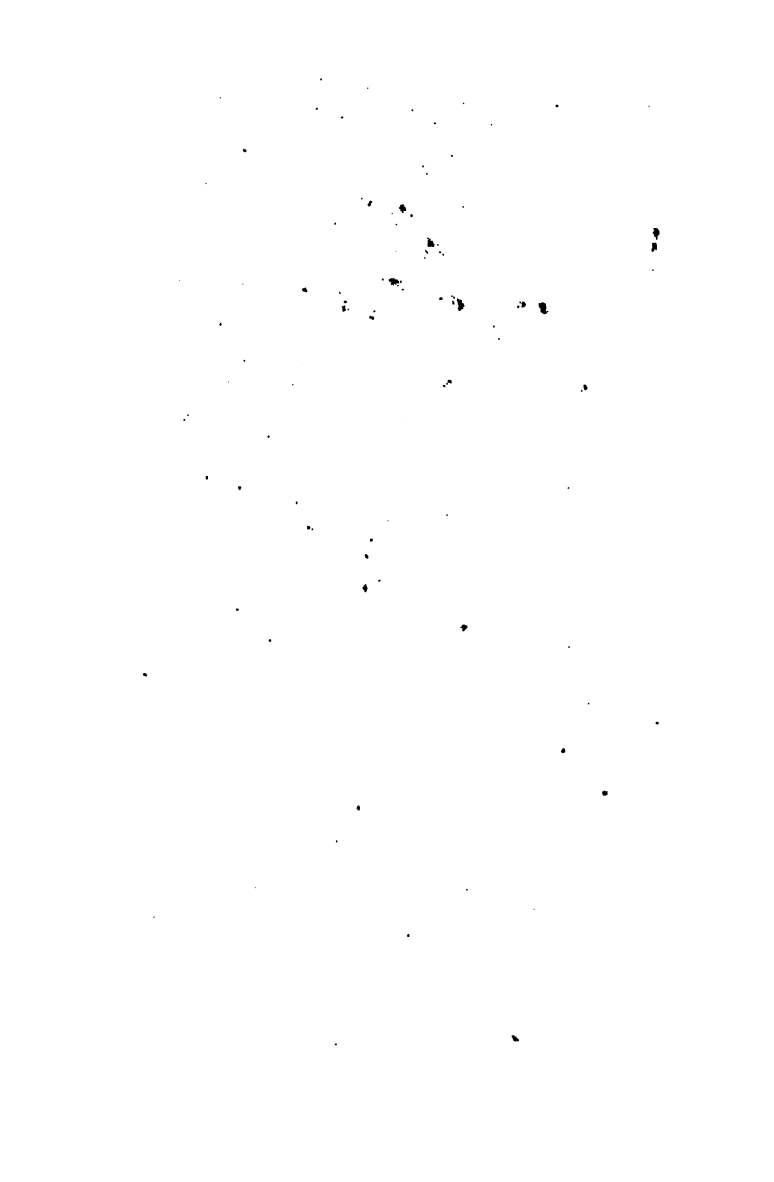
THE friends which merit or usefulness can procure us are not able to supply the place of old acquaint-

ances, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight.

* * *

To lose an old friend is to be cut off from a great part of the little pleasure that this life allows. But such is the condition of our nature, that, as we live on, we must see those whom we love drop off successively, and find our circle of relations grow less and less, till we are almost unconnected with the world ; and then it must soon be our turn to drop into the grave. There is always this consolation, that we have one Friend who can never be lost but by our own fault, and every new experience of the uncertainty of other comforts should determine us to fix our hearts where alone true joys are to be found.

THE END.



—

**Doctor
Johnson
His Life
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